

Transfer of ARS Beltsville Plant Germplasm Quarantine and Indexing Program to APHIS

Since 1985, the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Plant Germplasm Quarantine Office (PGQO) has been responsible for the quarantine testing of prohibited genera germplasm in Beltsville, MD. Effective October 1, 2005, the responsibilities for the importation, testing, and distribution of all prohibited genera germplasm crops that are handled by the ARS-PGQO will be assumed by the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Plant Health Programs (PHP).

The primary crops served by this program are pome, stone, and selected small fruits, clonal and seed potatoes, sweet potatoes, sugarcane, grasses, and selected ornamental and tropical crops. Although the management of the program will change, the physical location of the quarantine program will remain in Building 580 on the USDA campus in Beltsville, MD. This transfer of responsibilities affects only the quarantine program previously conducted by the ARS-PGQO in Beltsville, MD.

The transfer of responsibilities reflects the operational nature of quarantine testing that is a component of the mission of APHIS-PHP. Both agencies are working closely together to assure a smooth transition and to ensure that imported plant material will continue to receive an uninterrupted and highly proficient level of care through the testing and release process. ARS scientists previously with PGQO will be located at the ARS Beltsville Agricultural Research Center. They will continue to provide research in support of the safe introduction of new and unique germplasm of the crops mentioned above and will work closely with APHIS-PHP to identify specific research needs.

The program manager for the APHIS-PHP program will be Dr. Joseph Foster 301-504-7100 ext 235; Joseph.A.Foster@aphis.usda.gov) and any questions or correspondence regarding this quarantine program should be directed to him beginning October 1, 2005.